



CATESOL Journal

13, 1
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Confessions of a Non-Native English-Speaking Professional

by *Jun Liu*

The author, a member of the TESOL Board of Directors, outlines three stages in the professional development of non-native teachers of English—puzzlement, endeavor, and empowerment. These stages reflect Liu's experiences as a student of EFL in China and later as a professor in the United States and are often both amusing and thought-provoking. He found that "U.S. culture overshadowed [his] linguistic abilities" and that the "normal" classroom behavior of both teachers and students in the United States differs considerably from his native China. These experiences were part of the "puzzlement" phase, and his "endeavor" to overcome what he terms an "adaptive cultural transformation" led to the second stage, where the issues of identity as both Chinese and American sometimes led to conflict. He cites a number of classroom behavior differences between students in the two cultures as obstacles he had to overcome, while still trying to maintain his Chinese identity. In the "empowerment" phase, Liu cites examples from the Ohio State University ESL writing program and his own experiences in academic writing, where L1 and L2 writing and thinking patterns were often at odds. In the end, he asserts that "the success of TESOL professionals does not depend on whether they are native speakers or non-native speakers of English." This article would be useful for anyone, native or non-native speaker, teaching in an EFL setting.

Language Testing

20, 1
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Interviewer Variation and the Co-Construction of Speaking Proficiency

by *Annie Brown*

Oral interviews have been and continue to be one of the most important means of assessing oral proficiency, particularly in the setting of a formal test. In this article, the author examines the effect of differences in interviewers as a factor in the outcome of the assessment; specifically, how do different interview strategies affect the qualitative outcome of the interview? In particular, the author looked at the conversational elements of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) interview and the impact of interviewer styles on test results. The article points out considerable differences in the opinions of those who rated the interviewee's performance, depending upon who performed the interview. When interviewed by one person, the subject was described as "natural" and having a "high level of fluency," while when interviewed by another was said to be "very hesitant" and having a "sort of beginners' style." This difference was traced to the explicit nature of the interviewers' questions or lack thereof, which led the subject to misinterpret the intent of the less explicit interviewer. The article highlights the need for greater emphasis on interviewer training and greater focus on what the test aims to measure. For anyone who might design or administer oral assessment instruments, this article is an important resource.

30 Years of TEFL/TESL: A Personal Reflection

by *Jack C. Richards*

The EFL/ESL field has certainly seen considerable change during the past thirty years, and few have contributed more to the growth of the profession during this period than Richards. In this article, he examines the goals of teaching English, the role of grammar, the processes of second language learning and the role of the learner, teaching the four skills, assessment, teacher preparation, and changes in the “best way” to teach a language—all from a personal historical perspective. After describing the historical changes in each of these areas, Richards leaves us with the current state of affairs and a hint of future direction. One recurring theme in the article is the shift from teacher-centered to student-centered language learning and the current emphasis on learning strategies of individual students. We have gone from the assumption “that good language teaching meant controlling the learner and that a good teaching method would lead the reluctant learner through the learning process” to models “which focus on the learner as an individual and seek to encourage learner initiative and to respect learner differences.” For any teacher who needs to read a concise account of what the current “best practice” is and how it came to be, this is an excellent resource.

RELC Journal

33, 2

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Process and product in educational innovation: Implementing standards in Egypt

by *Anne M. Katz* and *Marguerite Ann Snow*

This article outlines the Pharos Project, a long-term effort in Egypt to improve the standards of English language learning. While the authors focus only on the context of Egypt, their findings apply equally to other parts of the world. The Pharos Project, an outgrowth of the Integrated English Language Program begun in the mid-1980s, targets four settings for reform: teachers, teacher trainers, educational leaders, and in-service training programs. The framework is divided into three conceptual levels: domains, or broad areas applicable specifically to the Egyptian setting; standards, what educators should know or be able to do as a result of training; and indicators, observable, assessable activities or behaviors that educators may employ to achieve a specific standard. While the results of this project were not dissimilar to those of the Council of Europe’s recent initiative, the authors point out that some of the results were unplanned but perhaps not unexpected. Standards sometimes failed to match the existing structure in a school or ministry. For example, the use of communicative activities, based on an audiotape, to foster the use of all four skill areas did not fit well when applied to the traditional setting of an Egyptian classroom with its highly organized and obedient students. Another area of mismatch was found in the discrepancies between the standardized English tests, written by a different ministry, and the standards in Project Pharos. If teachers follow the new standards, their students may well be unprepared for the important exams, which in turn means teachers may be unwilling to abandon the old standards. This article should prove useful to anyone involved in curriculum reform or teacher evaluation.

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